

# ANCO FAX News

Association of Northern California Oncologists  
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Vol. 5, No. 22

November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2006

## INTRODUCTION

The *ANCO FAX News* focuses on ANCO's core activities—advocacy, clinical and professional education, membership benefits, and *Association* news. While membership mailings, FAX broadcasts, and ListServ postings continue, the *ANCO FAX News* summarizes this information in a regular forum of important news to members. Contact the ANCO office for additional information regarding any item published in the *ANCO FAX News* or to contribute items.

The *ANCO FAX News* is sent to member practices (via FAX) and Corporate Member contacts (via e-mail). The next regular *ANCO FAX News* will be published on December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Comments on and contributions to the *ANCO FAX News* are always welcome and encouraged at ANCO, P.O. Box 151109, San Rafael, CA 94915-1109; Voice: (415) 472-3960; FAX: (415) 472-3961; ExecDir@anco-online.org.

## ADVOCACY

[*Editor's Note:* ANCO meets regularly with national, regional, and statewide organizations to discuss issues of importance to hematology/oncology practices and people living with cancer. We continually seek input from members on agenda items for these meetings. Send your issues to the ANCO office.]

### *ACCC, ASCO, ASH, and National Legislative & Regulatory Issues*

[*Editor's Note:* ANCO is a member of the *Association of Community Cancer Centers* (ACCC) and a state/regional affiliate of the *American Society of Clinical Oncology* (ASCO).

ANCO and the *American Society of Hematology* (ASH) share information with members. We regularly participate with these organizations on matters of national importance to cancer care.]

**CMS/Medicare released its final Medicare physician fee schedule notice for 2007.** ASCO is in the process of analyzing the fee schedule to determine its overall impact on oncology care in 2007. In its press release announcing the fee schedule, CMS stated that an extension of the oncology demonstration "remains under consideration." ASCO is deeply concerned that

**There is information in the  
ANCO FAX News  
for every member of your practice  
or organization.  
Pass it along!**

- Physician Members
- Nurse & Office Managers
- Office Staff
- Colleagues & Representatives

The *Association of Northern California Oncologists* (ANCO) is an association of hematologists/oncologists dedicated to promoting high professional standards of cancer care by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas, data, and knowledge. The material contained in the *ANCO FAX News* is intended as general information for ANCO members. Because diagnostic, treatment, contracting, coding, and billing decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, any such information contained in the *ANCO FAX News* may not apply in any given situation. Members are encouraged to contact their own consultants or advisors to obtain specific advice on matters relating to contracting, coding, and billing. The information contained in the *ANCO FAX News* should not be used as a substitute for such advice.

CMS has not committed to an extension of the demonstration project in the *Final Rule*. CMS had predicted at the beginning of this year that the demonstration project would add \$150 million into the cancer care delivery system. ASCO believes these resources have been critical in enabling oncology practices to continue delivering services. To advocate continuation of the demonstration project and ensure access to quality oncology care for Medicare beneficiaries in 2007 and beyond:

- ASCO members should contact their *Members of Congress*, stressing that the demonstration project provides important data to CMS on cancer care services and ensures that practices have the resources they need to treat patients. You can find information on how to contact your *Senator* or *Representative* at [capwiz.com/asco](http://capwiz.com/asco).
- ASCO has and will continue to work with *Members of Congress*, the *Administration*, and the *White House* to urge an extension of the demonstration project in its current form and funding level.

Based on the information in the fee schedule, now it is more important than ever for the oncology community to redouble its efforts to advocate proposals that:

- **Address the issue of "underwater" drugs:** HR5179, introduced by *Representative* Ralph Hall, would give CMS the authority to increase drug payments when practices and institutions cannot obtain drugs for the Medicare payment rate. It would also remove prompt-pay discounts that are not passed on to practices and institutions from the *Average Sales Price* (ASP) formula, to better reflect available market prices.
- **Reverse the physician fee schedule cut:** The 5% conversion factor reduction announced in the fee schedule will have an adverse impact not only on oncology, but also for the medical community as a whole. ASCO has been working with the *American Medical Association* to reverse the cut and to provide positive updates to

Medicare physician payments in the coming years.

- **Recognize the full spectrum of oncology services:** ASCO supports HR5465, introduced by *Representatives* Lois Capps and Tom Davis, to establish a new Medicare payment for comprehensive cancer care planning from the time of diagnosis through the end of active treatment and beyond.
- **Delay impending imaging cuts:** Deep cuts in reimbursement for medical imaging are scheduled to go into effect in 2007. ASCO seeks to protect access to these essential services that enhance patient care and has urged that a study be conducted on the potential access issues associated with the cuts.

The *American Medical Association* (AMA) and the *Medical Group Management Association* (MGMA) have developed state-by-state profiles to assess the impact of the proposed physician payment cuts that will occur in 2007 if the *Sustainable Growth Rate* (SRG) formula is not fixed. By 2015, the 2006 Medicare *Trustees* report predicts that Medicare physician payment rates will be cut by about 40% due to the flawed payment update formula. An AMA survey conducted in June shows that 45% of physicians will either stop accepting or decrease the number of new Medicare patients they accept if Medicare payments are cut in 2007. From 2007-2015, Medicare payments in California will be cut by \$17.52B. For physicians in California, the average cut will be \$20,000 per year per physician. The 2007 cut to California physicians will be \$300 million due to the negative 5% update.

ANCO and ASCO continue to work towards ensuring that people with cancer have access to quality cancer care in the community. Practice resources are available at [www.anco-online.org](http://www.anco-online.org) and [www.asco.org/mma](http://www.asco.org/mma). Members may also call/e-mail ASCO's billing and coding hotline at (703) 299-1054/[practice@asco.org](mailto:practice@asco.org) for up-to-date information on changes in coding for drug administration services, as well as billing and payments for drugs. Specifically:

- The October 2006 quarterly update for the *Average Sales Price* (ASP) Medicare

Part B drugs pricing file has been posted on the CMS website at [www.cms.hhs.gov/McrPartBDrugAvgSalesPrice/02\\_aspfiles.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/McrPartBDrugAvgSalesPrice/02_aspfiles.asp).

### **CMA, MOASC, and State Legislative & Regulatory Issues**

[Editor's Note: ANCO and the Medical Oncology Association of Southern California (MOASC) are members of the California Medical Association's (CMA) House of Delegates and Council on Legislation. ANCO and MOASC coordinate advocacy activities in California.]

**California law (AB487) requires physicians to complete 12 hours of continuing medical education (CME) in pain management and the care of terminally ill and dying patients by the end of 2006.** Doctors licensed in California after 2002 (when the law was enacted) have four years from the date of licensure to complete this CME requirement. CMA's next presentation of *Pain, Palliation, & Politics: Pain Management and End-of-Life Care in California's Regulatory Environment* takes place on December 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> at the *Disneyland Hotel* in Anaheim. CMA tailored this program to meet the needs of physicians who do not specialize in pain medicine. Offering 14 hours of Category I CME, this program completely fulfills California's AB487 mandate. CMA members pay a \$335 registration fee; the nonmember registration fee is \$600. Register early and get \$40 off the registration fee. Visit [www.calphys.org/html/cc205.asp](http://www.calphys.org/html/cc205.asp) for more information or contact CMA's pain management seminar hotline at (415) 882-3330. CMA and the *University of California, San Diego*, have also launched a unique case-based CME program entitled *Pain Management: A Case-Based CME Program for Physicians* on DVD that physicians can use to receive their State-mandated CME. Contact UCSD at (888) 229-6263 for more information.

### **NHIC/Medicare, DHS/MediCal, & Private Payers**

[Editor's Note: ANCO meets with *National Heritage Insurance Company* (NHIC) that administers Medicare in California and the *Department of Health Services* (DHS) that administers MediCal in California.]

**The 2007 physician election period for the Medicare Part B Drug Competitive Acquisition Program (CAP) began on October 1<sup>st</sup> and concludes on November 15<sup>th</sup>.** CAP is an alternative to the *Average Sales Price* (ASP) method of acquiring many drugs and biologicals administered incident to a physician's services. Additional information about the CAP is available at [www.cms.hhs.gov/CompetitiveAcquisforBios/01\\_overview.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/CompetitiveAcquisforBios/01_overview.asp). Additional information about the 2007 CAP physician election process is at [www.cms.hhs.gov/CompetitiveAcquisforBios/02\\_infophys.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/CompetitiveAcquisforBios/02_infophys.asp#TopOfPage). The list of drugs supplied by the CAP vendor, including NDCs, is in the *Downloads* section at [www.cms.hhs.gov/CompetitiveAcquisforBios/15\\_Approved\\_Vendor.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/CompetitiveAcquisforBios/15_Approved_Vendor.asp). CAP physician election is an annual process that provides an opportunity for physicians who are not participating in the CAP to join. Physicians who are currently participating in the CAP must submit an election form in order to continue participation or to terminate participation. Physicians who are not participating in the CAP and do not wish to participate in the CAP at this time are not required to take any action. Completed and signed physician election forms should be returned by mail to your local carrier. Forms must be postmarked on or before November 15<sup>th</sup>. Finally, physicians participating in the CAP are encouraged to subscribe to the new CMS-CAP-Physicians-L mailing list to receive pertinent and timely information regarding the CAP. Go to [www.cms.hhs.gov/apps/maillinglists/default.asp?audience=3](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/apps/maillinglists/default.asp?audience=3), and then subscribe to the CMS-CAP-Physicians-L mailing list.

## EDUCATION

[*Editor's Note:* ANCO organizes clinical and professional education meetings throughout the year and throughout Northern California.]

### ***Newer Approaches in the Treatment of Multiple Myeloma: Do Emerging Therapies Offer an Advantage?***

ANCO is helping the *Leukemia & Lymphoma Society* announce *Newer Approaches in the Treatment of Multiple Myeloma: Do Emerging Therapies Offer an Advantage?* with Ann Mohrbacher, M.D., *Associate Professor of Medicine, USC Keck School of Medicine*. This program will take place on Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, at *Farallon Restaurant* in San Francisco. This program is supported by *Celgene*. Contact the ANCO office for additional information or visit [www.dlnrequest.com/registration](http://www.dlnrequest.com/registration) to register.

### ***Move the Ball! Golf Tournament***

ANCO is a member of the *National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship* (NCCS) and NCCS is hosting the *Move the Ball! Golf Tournament* on December 5<sup>th</sup> at *Pebble Beach Golf Resort*. This event is a highly unique networking opportunity for individuals and companies with an interest in "moving the ball" in the treatment of cancer. The *Tournament* will target health care venture capitalists, biotechnology and pharmaceutical firms, and cancer researchers vested in advancing cancer treatment. Off-the-course discussions will be held during an intimate dinner after the tournament at *The Inn at Spanish Bay* and will include an expert panel discussion focused on new generation therapies. For additional information, please visit [cem.powersgolf.com/cgi/detailsframe.cgi?id=688](http://cem.powersgolf.com/cgi/detailsframe.cgi?id=688).

### ***ASH Update Conference for Patients***

ANCO is a community sponsor of the *Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's ASH Update Conference for Patients* taking place on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007 at the *Renaissance Parc 55 Hotel* in San Francisco. The educational program will include local expert presentations for people living with hematological malignancies on the latest research discoveries in blood cancer. For more

information, please call Suzanne Kaufman at (415) 625-1106 or e-mail [kaufmans@lls.org](mailto:kaufmans@lls.org).

### ***Highlights of ASH***

ANCO is a cosponsor of ASH's *Highlights of ASH* program taking place on February 9-10<sup>th</sup>, 2007 in Marina Del Rey. The educational program will include expert analysis of groundbreaking research from abstracts presented at the *ASH 2006 Annual Meeting*. Attendees will not only hear expert analysis, but will also have the opportunity to discuss real cases with leaders in the field, network with colleagues, and earn CME credits. For more information, visit [www.hematology.org/meetings/highlights](http://www.hematology.org/meetings/highlights). (*Please note:* ANCO will also organize its annual *ASH Highlights* in February 2007 in the San Francisco Bay Area.)

### ***ANCO 2006 Annual Meeting Postponed***

ANCO's 2006 *Annual Meeting* has been indefinitely postponed. The reasons are both personal and professional. First, ANCO has been unable to arrange a substantially robust agenda/faculty to successfully attract a sufficient audience. Second, and contributing to the first, is that José Luis González's sister (and mother's caregiver) has been stricken by cervical cancer and he has been busy helping her through this difficult time. The *ANCO Board* made the decision to postpone the 2006 *Annual Meeting* so as to arrange for a more successful event no later than April 2007. ANCO members will be informed as soon as a new date is set.

### ***Additional Education Meetings***

Other meetings of possible interest to ANCO member practices are:

November 15<sup>th</sup>

*The Future Role of Cancer Vaccines*  
CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

November 17<sup>th</sup>

*New Trends in the Treatment of Head and Neck Cancer: Update from ASCO*

CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

November 29<sup>th</sup>  
*Difficult Side Effects of Breast Cancer Treatment: Memory Changes, Lymphedema, and Neuropathy*  
 CancerCare  
 Telephone Education Workshop

December 1<sup>st</sup>  
*Caring for Someone with Colon Cancer*  
 CancerCare  
 Telephone Education Workshop

December 5<sup>th</sup>  
*Advances in the Treatment of Lung Cancer*  
 CancerCare  
 Telephone Education Workshop

December 9-12<sup>th</sup>  
*48<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting & Exposition*  
 American Society of Hematology  
 Orlando, FL

December 19<sup>th</sup>  
*Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia (CML): Update from the American Society of Hematology (ASH) Annual Meeting*  
 CancerCare  
 Telephone Education Workshop

December 20<sup>th</sup>  
*The Latest Developments Reported at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium*  
 CancerCare  
 Telephone Education Workshop

December 21<sup>st</sup>  
*Update on Lymphoma Treatment from the 2006 American Society of Hematology (ASH) Annual Meeting*  
 CancerCare  
 Telephone Education Workshop

Please contact the ANCO office for more information about these meetings.

## MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES & BENEFITS

### *ANCO On-Line*

ANCO's independent website at [www.anco-online.org](http://www.anco-online.org) features:

- a general description and introduction to the *Association*, its activities, leadership, and membership benefits.

- advocacy information (including ANCO and ASCO MMA resources).
- clinical and professional education meeting announcements and distributed materials.
- survey reports, publications, ListServ, and WebLog.
- clinical trials information.
- links to affiliated organizations; and, updated physician, nurse, manager, and patient resources.

### *ANCO On-Line ListServ & WebLog*

The ANCO *Online ListServ* is available to all ANCO physician members, nurses, practice managers, and Corporate Member representatives. It is a source for the latest ANCO news and other information impacting hematology/oncology practices. These postings are digested in the ANCO *Online Weblog* at [www.anco-online.org/news/index.html](http://www.anco-online.org/news/index.html) (see below). It is also a way for ANCO members to communicate amongst themselves. To post an item to the ANCO *Online ListServ*, send e-mail to [anco@anco-online.org](mailto:anco@anco-online.org). (*Please note: Only subscribers to the ANCO Online ListServ may post items and the ANCO Executive Director will review all postings for appropriate content. In addition, to communicate directly and privately with the ANCO Executive Director, send e-mail to [execdir@anco-online.org](mailto:execdir@anco-online.org).*) All ANCO physician members and their staffs are encouraged to subscribe, participate, and use the ANCO *Online ListServ* to receive ANCO information electronically and to communicate with colleagues about issues of importance to hematology/oncology practice. To subscribe, send your e-mail address to the ANCO office at [execdir@anco-online.org](mailto:execdir@anco-online.org). The ANCO *Online ListServ* should be as interactive and open to discussion as possible. However, subscribers must bear in mind that all posts/replies to the *ListServ* are received by the subscribers. Therefore, personal requests and replies not intended for the entire group of subscribers (e.g., meeting RSVPs) should not be posted on the *ListServ*. In addition, and in accordance with HIPAA regulations and anti-trust law, neither patient identifying information nor practice economic information

should be included in any *ListServ* communication. To reply to an individual one-on-one or "off *ListServ*", address your e-mail to the intended recipient directly. For such communication in response to a *ListServ* item, subscribers need to "forward" the message "to" the intended recipient's e-mail address, or "reply" to the message and replace the "to" e-mail address with the intended recipient's e-mail address. If one inattentively "replies" to the *ListServ* posting, then the entire group of subscribers will receive the reply.

**The WebLog (ANCO News On-Line) posts and archives important news for hematology and oncology practices on an almost daily basis.** Among the additional news topics covered at [www.anco-online.org/news/index.html](http://www.anco-online.org/news/index.html) are:

- ACCC Alerts
- ANCO Meeting Announcements
- ASCO's e-News and Cancer Policy Today
- ASH Practice Update
- CMA Alerts
- CMS/Medicare Website Updates
- NHIC/Medicare Website Updates

ANCO urges its members to bookmark [www.anco-online.org/news/index.html](http://www.anco-online.org/news/index.html) (or subscribe to [www.anco-online.org/news/rss.xml](http://www.anco-online.org/news/rss.xml) using your favorite news reader software; e.g., RssReader for Windows or NetNewsWire for Macintosh) and refer to it often.

### **Benefits**

ANCO continues to seek ways to make membership more beneficial. The *Board* constantly identifies, reviews, and approves of additional membership benefits. In addition to the benefits derived from its advocacy, educational, and information dissemination activities, ANCO members also benefit from group purchasing activities and value added services from a number of vendors, including:

- **California Oncology Consortium (COC) Group Purchasing Organization (GPO).** The COC GPO has preferred

vendor agreements and discounted pricing with *International Oncology Network (ION)/Oncology Supply (OS)*, and *McKesson Specialty Oncology Services* (formerly *National Oncology Alliance* or NOA) for oncology pharmaceuticals and a wide-range of value-added services. Contact your local ION/OS or McKesson/NOA representatives for more information.

- **Oncology Pharmaceutical Services (OPS)**, a division of *US Oncology*. Contact Sean Taylor at (415) 235-4673 or [sean.taylor@usonology.com](mailto:sean.taylor@usonology.com) for more information.

- **Onmark, OTN's preferred group purchasing organization.** Contact Monique Weston at (650) 871-2108 or [monique.weston@onmarkservices.com](mailto:monique.weston@onmarkservices.com) for more information.

**Onmark is hosting *Current Perspectives in the Treatment of Bone Metastases***, a webcast featuring James Berenson, M.D., and Kenneth Fleisher, D.D.S., on Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, at 3PM and Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, at 9AM. Visit [onmarkevents.webex.com/onmarkevents](http://onmarkevents.webex.com/onmarkevents) to register for one of these webcasts. Replays will be archived on [www.onmarkservices.com](http://www.onmarkservices.com).

**ANCO and *IntrinsiQ Research* have agreed to make *IntelliDose*, a clinical oncology software solution, available to ANCO members at a significant discount.** In addition, ancillary products/services, and maintenance fees will also be discounted for ANCO member practices. ANCO FAXed broadcasted in mid-October and *IntrinsiQ Research* followed the FAXed announcement with mailed information regarding the *ANCO/IntelliDose Discount Program* to all ANCO member practices. Representatives from *IntrinsiQ Research* will also be calling ANCO member practices to discuss the *Program* in detail. Members may also contact Kris Beinder at *IntrinsiQ* directly at (800) 565-2279, x151 or [kbeinder@intrinsiq.com](mailto:kbeinder@intrinsiq.com). For more information about *IntrinsiQ Research* and *IntelliDose*, please visit [www.intrinsiq.com](http://www.intrinsiq.com).

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

### Annual Election

Four seats on the ANCO *Board of Directors* are up for election in 2006. ANCO seeks nominations for candidates for these seats. This year's election will be conducted via mail ballot in December. Candidates with the top four vote totals will serve for three years (i.e., from 2007-2009, inclusive). Nominate an ANCO member (including yourself) to stand for election to the *Board* via FAX to the ANCO office at (415) 472-3961 no later than November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### Board of Directors

The ANCO *Board of Directors* teleconferenced on November 8<sup>th</sup> to discuss and/or act upon the following issues:

- National and California legislative/regulatory issues and public and private payer issues.
- Clinical and professional education, and *Annual Meeting* plans for 2007.
- California Oncology Emergency Master Plan.
- Additional membership benefits and surveys.
- Budget and investment status.
- *Board* member attendance at meetings/teleconferences and *Annual Election* candidates.

Contact the ANCO office for additional information on any of these items.

The ANCO *Board of Directors* meets regularly by teleconference and occasionally in person to discuss issues affecting the *Association*, clinical and professional education, and ways to better serve the membership. *Board* meetings are open to individual physician members. The **next regularly scheduled ANCO *Board of Directors* teleconference** will take place in January 2007. Please call José Luis González, *ANCO Executive Director*, at (415) 472-3960 if you wish to participate in a future meeting.

### Individual Member News

Richard Cohen, M.D., was named to the *Strike Out Cancer Hall of Fame* by *Zero Breast Cancer*, a Bay Area-based research community organization. Dr. Cohen was honored for his approach to patient education that offers effective ways to manage cancer.

*The ANCO Directory of Members 2006* was published and mailed to ANCO physician members; nurse and office manager contacts; and, Corporate Member representatives at the end of June. Additional copies are available from the ANCO office upon request. Please verify your *Directory* entry and contact the ANCO office with any corrections, additions, and/or deletions. The next *Directory* will be published in June 2007.

The following **update(s) to the *Directory*** should be inserted in the appropriate location(s):

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**Institutional Member News**

ANCO thanks the following **Institutional Members** for their support:

- *Stanford University Medical Oncology*
- *University of California, Davis, Cancer Center*
- *University of California, San Francisco*

For information on **continuing medical education meetings** being organized by our

**Institutional Members**, please visit:

- [med.stanford.edu/seminars/cme-all.jsp?qcme=on](http://med.stanford.edu/seminars/cme-all.jsp?qcme=on)
- [www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cme/conferences](http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cme/conferences)
- [www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/index.aspx?Display=Date](http://www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/index.aspx?Display=Date)

UCSF's *Pain Management and End-of-Life Care* takes place in San Francisco on November 16-17<sup>th</sup>. This course is designed for all physicians, nurses, and pharmacists who care for patients in pain or with life-threatening illness. It meets California's requirement that physicians take 12 hours of CME in pain and palliative care. Visit [www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MDM06P26](http://www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MDM06P26) for more information.

The *8<sup>th</sup> Annual UCSF/UCD Thoracic Oncology Conference* takes place in San Francisco on November 18<sup>th</sup>. Visit [www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MSU07004](http://www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MSU07004) for more information.

Stanford's *Grand Rounds: Ovarian Cancer Prevention, Detection, and Treatment* takes place at Stanford on November 20<sup>th</sup>. Visit [med.stanford.edu/seminars/details-documents.jsp?semid=10503](http://med.stanford.edu/seminars/details-documents.jsp?semid=10503) for more information.

Stanford's *Perspectives on Pain and Palliative Care* takes place on December 8-9<sup>th</sup> in Palo Alto. Visit [med.stanford.edu/seminars/details-documents.jsp?semid=8353](http://med.stanford.edu/seminars/details-documents.jsp?semid=8353) for more information.

UCSF's *6th Annual Clinical Cancer Update* takes place at Lake Tahoe on January 26-27<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Visit [www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MSU07006](http://www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MSU07006) for more information.

UCSF's *Current Controversies in Urologic Oncology* takes place in San Francisco on February 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007. Visit [www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MUR07001](http://www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MUR07001) for more information.

The *9<sup>th</sup> Annual Northern California Tumor Board at Silverado* will be presented by the *Stanford University School of Medicine* on

March 16-18<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Registration and case submission materials can be obtained from Jennifer Schafer at (650) 724-2288 or [schafer@stanford.edu](mailto:schafer@stanford.edu). Visit [med.stanford.edu/seminars/details-documents.jsp?semid=10331](http://med.stanford.edu/seminars/details-documents.jsp?semid=10331) for additional information.

### Corporate Member News

ANCO thanks the following **Corporate Members** for their generous support that enables ANCO to grow and expand its services for the hematology/oncology community in Northern California, and to provide its members and their patients with substantial benefits in the areas of advocacy, education, and information dissemination:

*AMGEN • APPI/Abraxis Oncology  
AstraZeneca  
Bayer Oncology/Onyx Pharmaceuticals  
Berlex Laboratories • biogenIDEC  
Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology  
Cephalon Oncology • Clariant Diagnostics  
Enzon Pharmaceuticals  
Genentech BioOncology  
Genotope Corporation • Genomic Health  
GlaxoSmithKline  
International Oncology Network  
Lash Group Healthcare Consultants  
Lilly Oncology • Matrix Oncology  
McKesson Specialty Oncology Services  
MedImmune Oncology • MGI Pharma  
Millennium • Novartis Oncology  
Oncology Pharmaceutical Services  
Oncology Supply • Onmark  
Ortho Biotech/Tibotec Therapeutics  
OSI Pharmaceutical • OTN  
Pfizer Oncology • Pharmion  
Roche Oncology • Sanofi Aventis Oncology  
Schering-Plough Oncology • SuperGen*

Renewal packages for ANCO 2007 Corporate Memberships were mailed to Corporate Member contacts in late October.

**Genentech BioOncology's Targeting VEGF in Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer: An Overview of Avastin (bevacizumab)** with Angela Davies M.D., UC Davis Cancer Center, takes place on November 13<sup>th</sup> at *Le Papillion*, 410 Saratoga Avenue, in San José. Registration opens at

6:30PM with a 7:00PM talk. Call your local *Genentech BioOncology* representative, the ANCO office, or (800) 586-5819 for more information and to register for this meeting.

**Novartis Oncology informs ANCO that the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Gleevec for the treatment of five rare diseases:** 1) solid tumor dermatofibrosarcoma protuberans (DFSP); 2) relapsed/refractory Philadelphia chromosome-positive acute lymphoblastic leukemia (Ph+ ALL); 3) myelodysplastic/ myeloproliferative diseases (MDS/MPD); 4) hyper eosinophilic syndrome/chronic eosinophilic leukemia (HES/CEL); and, 5) aggressive systemic mastocytosis (ASM).

**Sanofi Aventis Oncology informs ANCO that the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Taxotere as a treatment for patients with inoperable locally advanced squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck (SCCHN).** The approval allows Taxotere's use for SCCHN in combination with cisplatin and fluorouracil.

### Clinical Trial News

ANCO members can obtain information about Institutional Member's clinical trials at [www.anco-online.org/trials.html](http://www.anco-online.org/trials.html).

### Patient News

PhRMA has printed a directory of patient assistance programs offered by its member companies that provide free or reduced price medicine to people in need. Download this directory at [www.asco.org/asco/downloads/PhRMA\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.asco.org/asco/downloads/PhRMA_Brochure.pdf).

### Publications, Services, & Surveys

ANCO's **2006 Patient Satisfaction Survey** attracted twenty-two physicians in five ANCO member practices, with mixed results for those who saw their customer service efforts gaining momentum. In summary, while physicians' scores were slightly higher, nearly all other ratings were lower than in 2004.

A two-year trend analysis looks like this:

Item/Mean	2006	2004
<i>Appointment</i>	4.42	4.77
<i>Staff performance</i>	4.69	4.72
<i>Communication</i>	4.46	4.49
<i>Physician performance</i>	4.68	4.66

At the same time, overall satisfaction declined from 4.76 to 4.65—a statistically significant difference, considering that mean scores for all specialist practices are clustered between 3.07 and 4.96 (which effectively compresses the range of scores into the top two points of the five-point scale).

Further, when benchmarking against the national oncology database, ANCO is chasing a moving target. The database is slowly ticking upward, due most likely to the push for "pay for performance" incentives. While ANCO's physician mean score rose only two hundredths of a point (from 4.66 in 2004 to 4.68 in 2006), its percentile ranking dropped from the 84<sup>th</sup> to the 72<sup>nd</sup> percentile. Viewed in terms of overall patient satisfaction, ANCO's ranking fell from the 88<sup>th</sup> percentile (2004) to the 55<sup>th</sup> percentile—again, due to the upward trending of the national database.

Taking a closer look at overall satisfaction, the summary responses are skewed toward the positive end of the scale:

Item/Resp	Exc	VGood	Good	Fair	Poor
<i>Overall satisfaction with practice</i>	71.3	23.0	4.8	0.8	0.1

Marketers interpret the spread of responses this way: Excellent and Very good percentages represent loyal patients who are good sources of word-of-mouth referrals. Fair and Poor ratings mean just the opposite. Good responses, as the mid-point of the scale, are best seen as a neither-nor rating, which suggests that overall, the "vulnerability index" of ANCO members is 5.7% (Good + Fair + Poor). Looked at another way, more than one of every 20 patients is either neutral or negative about their ANCO practice.

For specialists who depend on referral volume, that is not good.

Advice from *Sullivan/Luallin* (the consultants who conduct ANCO's patient satisfaction survey, and work with the highest-scoring practices on pay-for-performance incentives) includes sharing the survey results with the entire practice team, focusing on strengths as well as weaknesses, and involving everyone in a brainstorming of ways to raise these scores.

**The Quality Oncology Practice Initiative (QOPI) is a practice-based quality improvement program developed by ASCO volunteers.** QOPI includes a set of quality measures, a specified chart selection methodology, a secure system for data entry, automated data analysis and reporting, and a network of resources for improvement. Twice a year, staff at participating practices conduct a retrospective review of patient charts. Following every data collection period, the QOPI system generates a report for each practice. QOPI data can be used to satisfy the new practice performance improvement requirement for ABIM *Maintenance of Certification*. Register for QOPI at [www.asco.org/QOPI](http://www.asco.org/QOPI).

**Caring4cancer.com is a portal with all the specific coding and billing information a busy oncology practice manager needs.** It includes cancer-specific Medicare regulations, forms, coding education pieces, and a subscription to a free newsletter from Bobbi Buell. Visit [www.caring4cancer.com](http://www.caring4cancer.com) and select *Practice Management*).